

My name is Ann Speyer; I live at 13 Audubon Street, in New Britain. I am writing in support of Draft LCO#3471, an Act Concerning Police Accountability.

While I am proud of the conduct of the police in New Britain, of the clear standards to which they are held, to their commitment to serve and protect, I am aware that this is not universal throughout the state. And as our Police Chief Chute has said, transparency is always good and there is always room to improve.

This bill upgrades the Police Officer Standards and Training Council, (POST) making it a more effective and responsive body with better representation of all CT residents. This Council will be charged with certifying all police officers bringing conformity to higher standards to all police in our state. The Council will also be responsible for overseeing the recruitment of minority police into the departments. It will have the ability to conduct hearings and make determinations, which include the ability to suspend, censor, or decertify an officer. It will have the authority to create policy that leads to safe policing of crowds; it will have the authority to require implicit bias training.

I support the language of this bill which limits the use of force, especially as concerns choke holds. I am pleased to see officers being made responsible to act as reporters for any police action they observe which violates this. This is the model and the culture of the New Britain police department and it has worked well for us.

I support the creation of an independent office of the Inspector General. Presently investigations of police malfeasance are handed off to other police departments; this has at times lead to quashing of true investigations or at best slow justice. We need an independent process that will settle questions and bring the public confidence in their police.

I have been part of those collaborating to create a new Civilian Review Board for New Britain. There has been question as to whether we can create a board with subpoena power, so that investigations can have the tools they need to be productive. This bill will allow subpoena power to be given to Civilian Review Boards. Without this, such a board is window dressing, lacking the power to find out information.

There may be areas of this bill which will be tweaked and compromised, but it is my hope that it will pass in its entirety at the Special Session in July. It will be a path in the right direction for justice.

Thank you for reading my comments.

Ann Speyer

860 229-1075
aspeyer@comcast.net